

K257

TWELVE HUMBLE
PROPOSALS

To the Supreme Governours of the
three Nations now assembled at
Westminster, concerning

The { Propagation of the Gospel,
New modling of the Universities,
Reformation of the Laws.
Supply of the necessities of the poor;

**And many other things of great moment, which
may conduce to the honour of God, and the
comfort and joy of his people.**

By *M. R.* an admirer and adorer of the good provi-
dence of God, in making such happy
changes in these Nations.

Prov. 29. 2.

*When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice, but when
the wicked beareth Rule, the people mourn.*

Judges 5. 9.

*My heart is toward the Governours of Israel, who offered them-
selves willingly among the people.*

Prov. 28. 16.

*The Prince that wanteth understanding is a great oppressor, but he
that hateth covetousnesse shall prolong his dayes, Prov. 22. 16.
He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that
giveth to the rich shall surely come to want,*

L O N D O N,

Printed by *Henry Hills*, for *R. C.* and are to be sold by
Giles Calvert, at the *Black-spread Eagle*, at the
West-end of Pauls 1653.

know that what this time is not yet done
she is alive

And many other things of great moment which

LONDON

Printed by J. G. Smith for R. C. and are to be sold by
G. C. Smith, at the W. Smith's, at the
West-end of Fleet 1833



Then I read and consider those sacred Chronicles of the Kings
 and Governours of Judah and Israel, how variously they
 acted in their several affairs towards God and man; some-
 times finding that the Kings and Governours of those
 times were not upright with God, but turn'd aside from
 him, and consequently, they were of profane and carnall
 hearts, and then the worship of God was laid aside, and
 their actions were profane and unjust, and every one
 did as he list, and none called for justice; And sometimes again,
 the tide turned, and a good *Joash*, succeeding a wicked *A-
 aliah*, and a good *Josiah* succeeding the most wicked reign
 of *Manasse*, then a most blessed and glorious change is made in the
 Kingdom, how greatly is the Lord honoured by such Governours? and
 how much of his people made glad? and how doth Justice and Right-
 eousness flourish? and the Nation in General, fare the better? I say, when
 we compare these things, and compare them with the present proceedings of
 these Nations, in laying aside the late Tyrannicall King that
 was, and putting the Government into the hand of a Parlia-
 ment, there were many good men, (though too many bad al-
 so, in a blessed change, (though not such a reformation as was
 in the times of the Kings, to give free liberty to the people of God, to worship God ac-
 cording to the Law, and protected them from the oppositions and malice of
 the wicked, though not from the oppressions of some intestine in-
 mates, and wicked men that oppressed by the Law;) And con-
 sidering that God hath removed that mixed Parliament, and convened
 a new assembly of men, of whom it is to be hoped, that every individuum
 have their hearts upright with God; I do comfortably
 persuade myself, that God will now grant such daies to these three
 Kingdoms, as they enjoy'd in Judah in the daies of *David*, *Solomon*, *Asa*, *Ieho-
 shaphat*, *Ezekiah*, and *Josiah*, when Judgement did run down as wa-
 ter, and righteousness as a mighty stream, and the people were called up-
 on throughout that Realm to cleave unto the Lord, and to walk
 in the way of Justice, which was duly administered; I will instance but in that
 of *Josiah*, of whom it is said, 2 Chron. 19. 8, 9. that he did
 divide the land, giving them a charge in these words, Take
 heed, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you

in judgement. Wherefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.

And having this hope, that things will now be carried in such a current among you, I am encouraged to present unto your Honours, these few proposals; being perswaded, that all things of this nature will be acceptable unto you, and that you having the Spirit of God in you, which presseth after Righteousnesse and Holinesse, all motions tending thereto, will be welcome, and also usefull unto you, from whomsoever they come; and as for me, I could not chuse but communicate those few things, that were upon my heart, by way of proposal to you; though I should have been glad if others had been more forward, and prevented me herein: for so it had been done, I should have been satisfied, and I could wish, if any others had any other thing upon their Spirits, that may be of publique advantage, that they would all present them to your considerations: for it being done onely by way of proposal, it can be no way prejudicial, but may be severall wayes advantageous, to you: (if your Spirits be humble, as I hope they are, and will not slight any thing because it is propounded by another) for if it should be so, that the same things are propounded to you, upon solid and good grounds; which you had in your hearts before to do; or if it should be so, that what is, or shall be propounded to you by any of Gods people (though a great number should make proposals to you) should come short of what you have already in your heart to do, the Spirit of God, being powred out upon you, to fit you for Government, as it was upon the seventy Elders:

Yet this advantage you would have by their proposals, that you would be encouraged, to go on vigorously in the doing of those things, which both God and his people do perswade you to.

And thus leaving you to the consideration of the following Proposals, I only desire you (if there be any thing herein that suits not with your inclinations or intentions) to remember they are but Proposals: and may be either waved or improved as the Lord shall guide your hearts.

The first four proposals shall be concerning General, and the rest concerning particular things.

The first Proposal

1. Proposal.

That the Supreme Governours alwaies should remember that they have Rule over men must be Ruling in the fear of God.

And the first thing that I do propound to you in general is, that you labour to keep alwaies fresh upon your Spirits, those last words of David, the Son of Jesse, the man who was raised up on high, the annointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel, mentioned 2 Sam. 23. 1. 2. 3.

The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue, the God of Israel said, the rock of Israel spake to me.

He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God: and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth; even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. wherein ye that are called to be Rulers over men, have your great duty, and your very great encouragement thereunto laid down; your duty being to be just, and to Rule in the fear of God, which I hope you will seriously consider daily; for your encouragement thereunto is exceeding great, for if you so be and do, you shall never be put out in obscurity, not but your light shall

shall be glorious: and the fruits that you bring forth in that light shall be precious, for you shall not be unfruitful, (if you be just, and Rule in the fear of God) but you shall be as the tender grass, springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain, which is exceeding desireable to all whom it concerns. Oh therefore let this precious word be alwayes sounding in your ears, and make deep impressions in your hearts! **HE THAT RULETH OVER MEN, MUST BE JUST, RULING IN THE FEAR OF GOD.**

2. Prop. That you would consider, that the time of the reign of Christ is at hand; either personally, or by the glorious powings out of his Spirit upon his people, which will as visibly demonstrate that he is King and reigneth, as if he were personally on earth, and when he reigneth, he will Judge the world with equity, and the people with his truth. Oh therefore do you strive to be his forerunners! and to give the world a taste, what it is to have Jesus Christ to reign over the Nations of the earth (either immediately in his own person, or mediately by his Saints, making them Princes in all Lands) by doing such Just and Righteous things, as you do know, or may know, Jesus Christ will do when he reigns on earth; so will you do as much as in you lieth to set up the Kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth, and to hasten that glorious time for which the Spirit, and the Bride, the Spouse of Jesus Christ hath so long waited, Saying, *come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

3. Prop. that you would take up holy resolutions in the strength of the Lord, and not your own strength, to lay aside all your own interests, and outward advantages, and to be in a manner careless of your own outward estates, not caring what becomes of them, so you may advance Christ: but resolving with a holy indignation to trample upon any worldly advantages, when they come in competition with doing service for Christ, not taking care to lay up great estates for your posterity, or to gain great estates for your selves, aiming at being accounted great and honourable among men (leave you that to others that believe not, *for how can you believe that seek honour one of another*) but knowing that the more careless you are of providing estates for your children, and of seeking the honour of men; upon the account of doing service for, and the honouring of God, whose great name you have taken upon you, and whose servants you professe your selves to be, the more care will God take for you, and yours, and the more honour shall ye receive from men, said I from men onely? I might say from God also, for they that honour God, God will honour. Oh therefore make it your work to honour God! and trust him for estates, and whatsoever shall be good for you and yours.

4. Prop. That you be quick and speedy in doing the work of the Lord, being diligent in business, fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord. I say be speedy in doing (though not without seriousness and consideration) for hope deferred maketh the heart sick, and the tedious delays of your predecessors in authority, made the Common-wealth sick and weary, and (with reverence be it spoken) God himself weary to the spuing them out; They spending commonly but sixteen hours in a week, for the dispatching of those great and weighty things which God called for at their hands, and which they had no

2. Proposal.
That they would alwayes remember that Jesus Christ must now reigo, & so act as those that are officers deputed by him.

3. Prop.
That they would make it all their care to do service for Christ in their place, and leave the care of themselves and their posterity wholly to him.

4. Proposal.
That they

heart unto, whereas they had more need to have sitten 16. hours in a day, to have dispatched their work, that so there might have been no complainings in our streets. But they accounted onely three or four houres sitting in the forenoon, onely of four dayes in the week, sufficient for the doing the work they had to do; as if there were nothing now to be done, but to spin out the time of a perpetuall Parliament from age to age, and therefore they would do but a little now, and a little then, consider of an Act for the relief of the poor, or for paying publique faith-money one day, and then lay it aside for three, fix, twelve moneths together, and do no more in it this year, than they did the last. But oh that by how much they have been negligent and careles of doing the work which they ought to have done, by somuch the more you would be diligent and resolved, and unwearied in your work; and labour of love for God, and for his people, and for the Common-wealth of the three Nations! I say not this as if things could be all done in a moment, for they will deserve to be blamed that shall be too pressing upon you, and be by and by offended if you make not such hast as some hasty Spirits may expect. But I only propound, that you take up resolutions to be speedy, and if you so resolve, and indeavour it, as you can approve your hearts in the sight of God, you need not care though some troubled and hasty Spirits should be offended, only impute it to their zeal and ignorance: And their zeal being good, therefore dispise them not, because of their ignorance of the greatness of your work, and the obstructions that may possibly be sometimes in your way.

And thus much for the general Proposals, and now I come to propound some particular work, which may tend very much to the honour of God, and the joy of his people being done by you.

5. Proposal.
That they
would zealous-
ly indeavour to pro-
pagate the
Gospel.

5. Prop. That it be your earnest endeavour to propagate the Gospel; and this I propose to you not so much as you are Magistrates, but as you are Christians, that is to say, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, and so are become indeed the Sonnes of God: for it is the duty of every such soul as is indeed not onely a Professor, but a Possessor of Christ, to do all that in him lies in his particular place and Station to propagate the Gospel these four ways. First, in praying that the Gospel may run and be glorified. 2. In improving what talents he hath for publishing the Gospel; for no man ought to hide his Talent or Talents, but to improve them for his Masters advantage. 3. In exhorting others whom he finds to be gifted, and fitted to that work, (if he see them to neglect it) to improve their Talents for the honour of their Lord. 4. In administering to the necessities of such as do make it their work to preach the Gospel, but have not any outward estates for the supply of themselves and their families, but what is communicated unto them for that work: for such must live of the Gospel.

And these four things Right Honourable, I propound to you, as your duty, not as you are Magistrates, as I said before, but as you are Christians.

1. That you incessantly pray to the great Lord of the Harvest, to send forth Labourers into his Harvest, that so the Gospel may be gloriously published abroad in the world,

2. That although you are Magistrates, and have other great affairs in your hands,

hands, yet remember you are also Christians and Saints, and you ought to improve your gifts and Talents this way also to your masters honour as often as you have opportunity. David was a Magistrate and a Saint, and he did the work of a Magistrate in his place, and the work of a Saint also. He ceased not to publish the glorious truths of God in the great congregation.

3. That you do not onely so your selves, but that you exhort and encourage others whom you know to be gifted (but of themselves are shie and backward) to improve their gifts, and this to do as you are Christians; and you being not onely Christians but Magistrates, have a greater advantage in doing of it than other Christians have: for First, you have power to protect those whom you exhort to this duty from the violence of any enemies, if there be any that should dare to oppose them, though it is to be hoped that there are none in these three Nations under your Jurisdiction, at least none that will openly shew themselves to be such enemies of Christ. And Secondly, you have power to command that the doors of the publick meeting places be set open, and free to all that are known to be godly and faithfull dispensers of the word of Christ, whether Presbyterians, or those commonly called Anabaptists, or Independents, whereas some Presbyterian Ministers have taken upon them very lately, to keep the doors of some publick meeting-places shut against all but themselves, or whom they pleased, and would not suffer godly Ministers to preach in those places, no not at such times as themselves did not preach, nor any others for them.

4. That you administer to the necessities of such as out of love to Christ do feed the Lambs and Sheep of Christ, with wholesome food, and make it their work so to do, not having any outward estate for the supply of themselves and their families, but what is administered unto them for that work; and this likewise you may do as you are not onely Christians but Magistrates, with a far greater advantage than other Christians may. But under this head I have these eight particulars to propound unto you.

1. That you resolve with all possible speed to repeal the Law of Tithes, which is a great oppression not onely to the estates, but to the consciences of many good people.

2. That idle droons that have no acquaintance with Jesus Christ, and know onely how to fleaze and not how to feed the Sheep of Christ, may receive no encouragement from you in that work; but rather you should encourage them to leave that work, by inviting of them to some other employment if you think that any of them may be fit for it. But if other private men are like unto themselves will support them, or maintain them they may, but poor souls they should have no encouragement from you in that work.

3. That such Preachers of the Gospel as are Pastors of particular Congregations, baptized or others, be desired by you to bring their people into each publick meeting place that is most commodious for such a congregation, and thence of all neereff their habitations, both in the City and Country, that so the people of that parish, and as many as shall desire to hear the word there, may be made partakers of it freely without any charge. The Church in the primitive times did meet in such places where unbelievers might come to hear them, and desired to be convinced of them all, and converted to the faith; 1 Cor. 14. 24.

8. Particular things necessary to be done in order to the propagation of the Gospel.

1. That tithes be abolished.

2. That blind Priests may have no encouragement to mislead poor souls.

3. That the Pastors and gifted brethren of all Churches be desired to preach in publick meeting places.

4. That

4. That two or three Parishes be reduced to one

4. That in the City of London, two or three parishes that have but few people belonging to them, may be reduced to one, that so there may be so much the lesse charge required for the maintenance of Gospel preachers; whereas now one man takes a maintenance from a Parish, where scarce 40. or 50. usually come to hear him.

5. That godly Presbyterians and all other godly Preachers may have free liberty alike to preach.

5. That no Minister, Presbyterian or other, that is of a Godly conversation, be taken from any people that do love and desire his Ministry, unlesse it be to remove only to the distance of two or three Parishes at most, so as the people that are affected with his Ministry, may hear him if they please: provided that at other times when he doth not preach, the same pulpit may be free for any other godly man to preach there: for there may be other Godly people of the same parish, or Corporation, that may as much desire the Ministry of another, as they of him, and when it is so, the one minister should have liberty in the fore-noon, and the other in the afternoon, and so both parties may be satisfied.

6. That such as are Magistrates, and all others that are gifted, and of holy and godly conversations, be desired to Preach.

6. That for the supply of the peoples wants of some to dispence the word unto them, you do not only desire Pastors of Churches to preach the word in publick places, but you do also desire those great men, and good men that have great estates, that have been shy of going into the Pulpits hitherto (though they are better furnished with gifts, and fitted with abilities; for that work than many that call themselves ministers and Clergy men) to go and preach the Gospell freely, according to those Talents they have received; for it is their duty to do so, and as they are the Servants of Christ (as every one hath received a gift, so he ought to minister, as good Stewards of the manifold grace of God) they ought to improve their Talents, and in improving they may increase them. And being sensible of the great blindness people are in for want of teachers, you ought to incourage and invite them thereunto, and for this you have the example of that good King Iehoshaphat 2 Chron 17. 7, 8. *Who in the third year of his reign sent to his Princes, even to Benbaill, and to Obadiah, and to Zachariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the Cities of Judah, and with them Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, &c. and they taught in Judah, and went throughout all the Cities of Judah, and taught the people.* That good Kings heart being lifted up in the waies of the Lord, ver 6, that is wonderfully enlarged, and raised up towards God, he therefore went on in the waies of the Lord vigorously, throwing down the false priests, and false worship practised in those times, and knowing that the generality of the multitude of the people were ignorant of the waies of the Lord, He therefore sent to his Princes to go up and down, and teach in the Cities of Judah, not that it may be supposed that all the Princes of Judah were fit for that work, but he sent to such of them as he knew to be holy men, and men having the Spirit of the Lord in them, and therefore they are singled out, and mentioned by name even Benhail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiah, and with them those Priests and Levites also that were fittest for that work, (for many of the Levites might be as bad as the worst of others) even such and such by name. Thus do you desire those that are men of estates, whom you know to be gifted as aforesaid, of whom it may be there may be ten or twelve, or more or lesse, in a City, or County, to ride abroad in-

to the Country, and improve their gifts among those people that want teaching.

7. That (for further supply of the people with gospel Preachers, and supply of maintenance for such as are willing to preach the Gospel, but have no outward estates) the Universities be new modelled, And that those estates which were intended by the Donors of them to supposed pious uses, may be wholly converted to such uses as are indeed pious, that is to say, a part thereof, to be for the supply of such Preachers as are able and faithful Ministers of the New Testament, and have not outward estates of their own for their supply; And another part of those University estates, for the supply of such godly Scholars as are to be brought up at the Universities (and their godly Tutors,) and of such of those Scholars onely, as whose parents are not able to maintain them there themselves, and that others who desire to put their children to the Universities, to study any of the liberal Sciences, do alwaies do it at their own proper charge, and not that things be so corruptly carried as they have been, and yet are; That many Scholars that are mens sons of vast estates, must have fellowships (as they now call them) and those that are mean (though their children are godly) cannot have any thing toward their maintenance, if they should send them thither; Yea and many of those that they call fellows for love of their fellowships, continue in the Universities all the dayes of their lives, (some of them being ancient gray-headed men) living there an idle life, and never coming abroad to set themselves to any employment wherein they may be usefull to Church or Commonwealth.

7 That the Universities be new mod'led.

8. That besides the maintenance which may come out of the University lands, you take care to provide some other maintenance for the supply of all godly and able Preachers of the Gospel, whether such as are commonly called Presbyterians, Independents, or others who do attend that work, or shall attend that work of Preaching the Gospel, and have not outward estates of their own to live upon: for you have power to imploy the publick treasure for the publick benefit of the Nation, and if for outward benefit, much more for spiritual benefit, which you ought in an especial manner to take care of as you are private Christians, and have the better opportunity to do it as you are Magistrates.

8. That some ways of maintenance out of the publick Treasury be provided for Gospel Preachers, but none by way of compulsion from the people.

But still remember this, that you ought never to presume to take any more authority upon you to do any thing in the Churches of God, in ordering Church affairs, than you may do as private Christians, wherein you may only advise, and desire things may be so and so, but may not impose any thing upon the consciences of Saints by force, for that were to do as the Beast hath done, which I am confidently perswaded you will never do, nor suffer any other under your Jurisdiction to do, by authority from you (though they may desire it of you).

But this let me add further as a caution, that as you take care that tithes be taken away, so that by no means you impose any law upon the people, to pay such or such a rate, for the maintenance of Ministers, for of that course severall inconveniencies will follow, 1. The consciences of many faithful Preachers will scruple to take that maintenance of you, which you compel from others, who are perswaded that they ought not to have any thing, but what is

freely given, neither directly or indirectly: And 2. The consciences of many people do scruple to be tied to give so much, or so much to such a use, but are perswaded that what they give to that use, they ought to give freely. 3. Some that are of such particular Churches as meet not in the Parish or Town wherein they live (if you should rate people severally) would be compelled to pay the rate, although they do contribute to their own officers, which will be unreasonable; for what God makes them willing and able to give of their temporals, they will desire to give it to those that do administer to them in Spirituals, therefore by no means compell any contributions of this kind from any sort of people: for several sorts of people are several wayes affected, and will desire liberty to give what they give in this kind, to such as they find most affected to, whether Episcopal, Presbyterians, Independents, or any others, and this liberty they should have, and not be abridged of it.

But when I propose it to you to take care to contribute to the maintenance of Godly Ministers, I mean (as I said before) that you do herein but as your duty is to do, being private Christians, viz. to contribute bountifully of your own estates; and the publick treasury being in your hands, to dispose a part thereof to this publick good work, but by no means (as I said before) by vertue of your authority, to impose any thing upon the consciences of particular people.

And thus by inviting those that now preach onely in private to their Churches, to preach in publick, and encouraging and desiring men of estates to preach the Gospel freely, and by reducing two or three Parishes into one, and abolishing tithes, and silencing idle droons, and making provision for the maintenance of those Gospel-Preachers that have not estates out of the University lands and otherwise, you will do that which may very much tend to the propagation of the Gospel.

4. Prop.

That the poor be seriously considered of, and freely provided for, being a work the Lord requires special care should be taken of it.

6. That you seriously and in good earnest lay to heart the condition of the poor, and make it your care to provide for the supply of their wants, and that consideration be had of their Condition before any rich mans case whatsoever be taken into consideration, how neerly so ever related to you, or any of you, (for I hope you will lay aside your selves and your relations, and regard them rather lesse than more than others) for certainly the crying of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, maketh a louder noise in the ears of the Lord of Sabbath, than the complaints of any rich man whatsoever; and his ear is more open to their cries, and why should not yours? Those passages Deut. 24. from the 10. v. to the end of the Chapter, wherein there are several Laws made by God, in which he maketh provision for the poor and needy, have taken great impression upon my heart, especially considering that it is he that requires his people to do so and so in the behalf of the distressed, and tells his people, that when they are compassionate, and shew acts of mercy and goodnesse towards the poor, that he will bless them for it in all the work of their hands, v. 19. and that it shall be righteousness unto them before the Lord their God, v. 19. which passages are worthy the serious consideration of every Saint; and especially of those that have most power to help the poor, as your Honours have; for certainly this great duty of compassion, and bowels of mercy and tenderneesse, and doing good to the distressed

fed and needy, is more strongly and eminently prest in the Gospel, than in the Law: but O how little is it practised (not to say in general in all Nations, but particularly) in England! it being a great scandal to religion in general, and a dishonor to the Nation also, that so many beggars go up and down in all parts of this Nation as there do, some whereof may do it for necessity, because they cannot otherwise live, though most do it out of idlenesse, because they will not work: wherefore if this course were taken, that every one that goeth up and down begging were taken, and presently carried to some work-houie, where they might be made to work, and allowed but some short allowance for their work, it would make them that are able to work to refrain going a begging, and to set themselves to some work or other whereby they might get more than possibly they may have at such a work-houie. And for such as are poor, and withall known to be weak and sickly, and unable to work, or have more children than their labour can afford bread for, it is a sad thing, that among such as professe themselves to be Saints, they should be exposed to want bread. It is true; the Churches do make provision for all their poor, but must none but those that are of Churches be provided for: as there are many godly people that are not in Church-fellowship, so there may be many goodly poor also that are not in Church-fellowship, which should be provided for, and not onely they, but others also, for we are to do good unto all, though especially to those who are of the household of faith; and for this end it were necessary that some way were found out for the setting of all poor people a work, even such as do not beg (but will neer starve rather) but yet do want work, which they would willingly set themselves unto, if they had but work to do; and then for others that cannot work, some waies should be found out for their supplies, and this might be one way.

That on the portage of all inland letters a price should be fixed at 3d a letter, or as your Honours shall think fit, and that some faithfull men be employed to mannage that business, who should be allowed such a certain stipend, for such an employment, and true accounts should be kept of what is received weekly for letters, and what is disbursd quarterly or otherwise for the paying of such as are employed in several places, about the carrying up and down of letters, and the remainder should come in for the use of the poor. And this being a publick thing, the benefit of it should not go into any private mens purses, and none of those that are employed about it should have more than they deserve for their pains, and time spent about doing the business that concerns it, and so some thousands of pounds might come in yearly to the poor that way.

Another way might be that a seal might be made in every City, Town, and Countie; wherewith every considerable contract, bargain or agreement, between man and man, should be sealed, for the Ratification of it, and without which it should be of no force, for which seal-6d. should be given, which might be of great use to the publick, and bring in an insensible income, for the use of the poor, faithfull men being appointed to be those Seal-keepers, and to register all persons names, by whom such bargains are made, and sealed, and the time when.

Other waies your Honours may also find out for the supply of the poor, as you see occasion.

That the benefit of portage of letters may be converted to the use of the poor.

7. Propofal. 7. Prop. That you having firft provided for the very pooreft fort, then That the next that you confider the conditions of fuch as are next them and are in a meaner fort, mean condition, though not in fo mean a condition as to want bread, and of people to ftand in need of almes. And the confideration you are to have of may have as their condition, is to provide that if they be wronged or defrauded by any, much or more that you do them right, or appoint fome to do them right, before you do fuch favour fhewn acts of juftice for perfons of greater eftates.

them in The ground of this propofall is, becaufe it is ordinarily fo carried, that the Courts of Ju- rich mans caufe is heard before the poors; but O do you extraordinary things ftice or other and let not fuch corruptions be in your proceedings! and according to the wife than the peoples poverty or meaneft, wealth or riches, let care be taken for their richeft fort. relief; wherein they are wronged, and let the richeft of all be relieved laft of all, becaufe that ordinarily they have had relief firft formerly: But if this reason be not fufficient then this is, becaufe the richeft are better able to bear delays than meaner people are. But it is fad to confider how contrary to this rule things have been formerly carried. As for inftance, feveral forts of people did contribute out of their eftates in money and plate for the defence of the late Parliament, and the richeft were firft paid, for they having money by them did double what was due to them, and had all their difburfements in lands, in which many of them had fuch good penyworth: as it was better to them than ready money: But the poor that had not to double it, they could not have their money to this day, only there was an Act that all whole debts were under ten pound, fhould be fatisfied, by vertue of which Act, there were indeed a fmall number of poor people whole debts were fatisfied. But alas there were many godly poor people that were fo zealous for that good caufe that then was profecuted, that they difbuift, fome above ten, others above twenty, thirty, fifty pounds for the Parliament, that it now may be, by reafon of the warrs, and of their great fufferings, have far leffe eftates than many covetous perfons that lent but 5 or 10 l. fo that fatisfaction fhould be made unto perfons, fooner or later, not according to the fum they difbuift, but according to the prefent condition of meaneft, and neceffities in which they are.

Propofal. 8. Prop. That a certain number of perfons be authorized by you to fit as Commissioners in every County, to hear the grievances of people, and That Commif- to difpatch all bufiness for them, that they be not inforced to come to Lon- sioners be ap- don for every occafion, as they have hitherto done, and yet do (which is ex- pointed to- ceeding chargeable to all, but efpecially to thofe that live in remore parts) difpatch all- to wait upon Commissioners here 3 moneths, 6 moneths, and fometimes 12 bufinesses and moneths together, but that thofe people may have their bufiness done with- which all- in a dates walk of their own habitations, as it may very well be in fome lic- grievances of- the Counties, if the Commissioners do fit in the moft commodious place for- people in the- ftuation in fuch Counties, not fo much aiming at the bigness, or largenesse, fpective- of fuch a Town or village, as the Situation of it, and in other Counties- Counties- that are larger, there may be Commissioners appointed to fit in two, or three- where they- feveral places in thofe Counties, according to the largeness of them, that fo- be- it may be as eafie for them to difpatch bufiness, as for thofe that are in leffe- Counties- and bufiness might be thus carried on with leffe charge to the- Commonwealt in general, and be leffe burthenfome to the particular mem- bers

bers of it, than now it is, As for instance, The Commissioners for compounding, and the Commissioners for removing Obstructions, and the Commissioners for sale of Lands, do all sit here, and all that have any business in either of these cases, must attend them here, though they live as far as Cornwall and Yorkshire, and here wait several moneths before their business can be dispatched, whereas were there Commissioners authorized to sit in every County, to dispatch the same businesses, The rules which are prescribed to these here to proceed by, would also serve for all the Commissioners in every County, and business might be far better carried on; for they sitting in every County, would be better enabled to take cognizance of every particular mans case, than these here can; for here they take the oaths of they know not whom, and according to those oaths whether true or false they pass the business; whereas in each particular County they might have more cleer knowledge what the persons are that swear to such or such a thing, and be able to judge of what credit their oaths are, which here they cannot do: and then for the worth and value of Lands, they might be better, and more fully informed than these Commissioners here can; for they trust to their Surveyors, and these Surveyors may be and sometimes are bribed, and lands are and have been undervalued, to the great prejudice of the Common-wealth. In these and severall other respects, great inconveniences come, for want of Commissioners sitting in every County, for the relief of the people, and the righting of the Common-wealth.

9. Prop. That you do wholly abolish and repeal those great and tedious volumes of Law, that are either in a strange tongue or otherwise (which serve for no other end, but to enrich the Lawyers, and impoverish others) and prepare instead thereof only some plain brief generall rules, which all men may be acquainted with, and appoint onely such pious, faithful and discreet men, for the administration of Justice, as never knew what those old laws meant, leaving them to do in matters of justice what the Law of God, and nature guides them to; very much whereof is contained in this, that men do as they would be done unto: for the happiness of a people will never consist in good lawes, but in good Magistrates, or administrators of Justice, and you need not fear to abolish those old ambiguous, strife-increasing, and substance devouring laws, for fear that you shall not find men enough fit, and able to judge with more righteous Judgement, then those lawes of themselves can guide them to; for blessed be the great God he hath poured out his spirit upon many already, and without all dispute, he will pour out of that spirit of his more and more, upon his people in these our daies; for laid down the Kingdome and appearing of Jesus Christ, is now near at hand, it is even large in at the door*, and be you strong and of good courage, and do his work, and your Lord when he cometh will blesse and reward you, if he find you so doing.

10. Prop. That you pick out the choicest men in each County for holyness of life, and freedom from covetousnesse, and for wisdom, prudence and understanding, whether rich men, or mean men, for the managing of your weightiest business, as to be Commissioners, and doers of justice henceforth between man and man, & put down these old customes, of making the richest men of the places where they live, Aldermen, and Justices of the Peace, Justices of the Peace or

though they be very Dunces, and very profane in their lives, who cannot chastise swearers and blasphemers, because they are such themselves, nor Justice but drunkards, because it is a vice they are guilty of themselves; the like may be said of other vices; but let it be your special care that faithfull and discreet men be appointed to administer Justice throughout the Nation; and then for other employments, as the Custom-offices, and the like, if there be not godly men enough to be found for them, they may be disposed of to others, that are of most civil and blamelesse conversation; but if Godly and conscientious men may be found for all, then such should be chosen before others, and things should not be carried as they have lately been, that enemies and men of vicious lives should be employed, when honest and faithful men that have suffered much for their faithfulness to the Common wealth, could never yet be employed, because they had not so many friends to speak for them, nor did not so eagerly seek after places as others did.

1. Prop.
That no officer that serves the Common wealth in such employments are not hazardous to their lives or healths be allowed more than 200 l. per annum.

11. Prop. That moderate and reasonable stipends, be allowed unto all those that are employed, that they may have no temptation to do the work grudgingly, or sparingly, but may dilligently attend it, as they ought to do, provided it be no such stipend as may enrich men, but that it may be accounted a dishonourable thing for to have it said that such a man was but in a mean condition the other day, and now is enricht by the publick treasure, I mean for such men as live at home and in ease, and do not at all hazard their lives, or health, or limbs, for the publick welfare; but as for such as so do, it would be ingratitude in a high degree, if they were not well rewarded; but it is no ingratitude to give those men but mean rewards, that do but mean and easie services; for to be Commissioner of the Customs is easie service, and to be a Treasurer or the like, is easie service, and ordinary rewards may suffice for them, so that no man for the discharge of such offices, should have more than 150 l. or 200 l. *per annum*, even they that have most, and are in the most honourable of such employments, and others but 40. 50. 60. or 100 l. *per annum*, according to the quality such persons have lived in, and the employment they shall be fit for: for some men of mean parts, may be fit onely for mean employments; whereas other employments require men of better parts, learning and abilities for the manning of them, and such men as have been so brought up, and are so quallified, will deserve greater stipends answerable thereunto; but any man though he hath five or six children, may maintain his family very comfortably with 200 a year, though not in outward state and pomp, and needlelesse vanities, in maintaining musick and dancing-Masters to teach their children, and decking of them in silks and silver, and the like; men that have estates of their own before, may do in these things what they please, but it should never be said that the publick treasure should be so expended, for there are many other more necessary things to be done therewith, and not to bestow a thousand, or five hundred, or three hundred a year either, upon any man that is employed in easie and peaceable employments at home.

And some Gentlemen of noble and publick spirits, who are men of great gifts for understanding and prudence, and have withall a holy heart, and zealous for God, who have great estates of their own, will be found no doubt ready and free whensoever they shall be desired to officiate in Honourable

able employments (as in being administrators of justice and Commissioners in other cases, &c.) and will not take any reward at all for it, but do it out of desire to be doing service for Christ, and to be improving their Talents for his use, but will be unwilling that ever it should be said that they were made rich by the Common-wealths Treasure, (as to the Honour of many noble Gentlemen in the Land, it may be yet said of them they have not medled with it) even such as Abraham as would not take of the King of Sodom the worth of a thread even so a shoe latcher, lest it should be said he had made Abraham rich. But other men of mean estates being men of large abilities, and of great Wisdom and Prudence, and Piety, being imployed in such offices (for want of rich men enough so qualified) should be allowed as aforesaid.

12. Prov. That you sell no more of those Lands that are forfeited to the Common-wealth, either in England, Scotland or Ireland, than of meer necessity you must, at the least that you do not sell them wholly, but sell them only for seven or ten years time, that so afterward they may come into the publick custody again, and serve to defray publick charges, that so taxes, excise, and customes, those great burdens of the people may be taken off.

And thus I leave these few Proposals to your Honours serious considerations, having great expectations that the Lord will make of you repayers of breaches and restorers of paths to dwell in.

And that to this end he will powre out his Spirit upon you, even the Spirit of Wisdom, and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, and the Spirit of Knowledge, and of the Fear of the Lord, that so you may be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and may judge with Righteousnesse the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the Earth*, as *Isa. 11. 2. it is said your Lord and Master Jesus Christ shall do when he cometh, is the fervent prayer of

Right Honourable,

The unworthy ser-

vant of Christ and

his people,

M. R.

London, July 7th 1653.



